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Technology teacher education program honored as nation's best

WEST LAFAYETTE, Ind. — A Purdue University program that prepares educators to teach engineering and technology education to middle and high school students was recently selected as the best in the country by a national association.

Purdue's program was chosen as the outstanding engineering and technology teacher education program by the Association for Career and Technical Education's Engineering and Technology Education Division. The award was given at the association's national conference.

"This is an especially significant award because it signifies that of all the technology education programs in the country, Purdue was considered the best," said George Rogers, the associate professor of industrial technology who coordinates the program. "That is quite an honor and a real testament to the outstanding faculty and students involved."

Purdue also received the award in 2004.

Purdue's program was evaluated by the association based on criteria that included rigor of the curriculum and opportunities for hands-on application of educational concepts.

The technology teacher education program is an undergraduate specialization area in the [Department of Industrial Technology](#). Students take courses in technology theory and application in the College of Technology and courses in classroom instruction in the College of Education. They graduate with both a technology degree and a teaching license.

Students in the program are required to take technology education courses in a variety of areas, including communications technology, computer graphics technology, civil engineering and architecture, manufacturing, power and energy technology, and electricity fundamentals.

"When our students graduate, they are prepared to teach students in any area of technology," said Kara Harris, an assistant professor of industrial technology who oversees

the program with Rogers. "What sets our program apart is that we give future teachers such a well-rounded, technology-based education, yet we make sure they also stay in line with the courses that are required through the College of Education.

"Our students have superior technology skills and, at the same time, are focused on being a teacher from day one."

Rogers said about 70 students are currently enrolled in the program, which dates back to 1908.

"It was the first teacher education program at Purdue, originally created as part of the university's land-grant mission to train teachers for industrial education," he said. "It has changed names many times through the years, but it's never lost its educational focus."

Purdue is one of just three Indiana universities to offer an accredited technology teacher education program. The others are Ball State and Indiana State.

Purdue's technology teacher education program is accredited by the National Council for the Accreditation of Teacher Education and the Indiana Professional Standards Board.

Rogers said strength of the program is that it was the first in the nation to integrate Project Lead the Way engineering components into the curriculum. Starting in 2005, technology education graduates began receiving a Project Lead the Way certificate along with their Purdue diploma and Indiana teaching license.

Project Lead the Way is a national non-profit organization established to help schools give students the knowledge and skills they need to succeed in engineering and engineering technology fields of study. The program provides engineering and technology education curricula for teachers in middle and high schools.

"We're especially proud of our strong focus on pre-engineering teacher education," Rogers said. "This makes a Purdue technology education degree much more valuable because our students can go straight into middle or high schools and teach any technology course without going through the additional time and cost of training."

Rogers said the need for technology teachers in middle and high schools is rapidly growing as schools are eager to prepare students to pursue fields in engineering, energy, transportation and other technology-related fields.

"Our graduates are very much in demand due to rapidly expanding technology and an increased need for qualified educators in this area," he said. "We have a very high

placement rate."

The technology education program also has an international component. Students can choose to study abroad program with Griffith University in Queensland, Australia. Two students are selected each fall for the program.

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